

# **POSITIVE VOICES-JANUARY 2010**

Your Newsletter by Positive People for Positive People

## **CLIENT SPOTLIGHT/ TEACHING ART AT THE IDENTITY YOUTH CENTER**

By Angelo

Moving back to Upstate (where I had grown up) from New York City has brought me full circle back to where my art started. I have been making art since the age of nine. My dream was to be an artist. As an art director to my Public Relations/Special Events Company for 28 years, my community and International causes has been a big part of my life. I was art director to Fashion Target Breast Cancer (FTBC) and AIDS Projects such as *Cinema Against AIDS* at the Cannes Film Festival for AmFar and *Skating for Life* for the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, DIFFA. FTBC, created by Ralph Lauren, is the charity of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, so far has raised \$150 million worldwide in 14 countries. Some of my other projects included *Violence against Women* for the Body Shop and a national touring fashion show and educational recycling event and a 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade student art contest (winners winning art supplies for their schools) for *The Eco-Experience* and *Master Apprentice Programme* for Wellman and Pepsi, the largest recyclers of plastic bottles. Since I won a full National Scholastic Magazine Scholarship to Syracuse University, I thought this was a good thing. You actually can win a scholarship without playing football or basket ball! Another of my favorite things was illustrating the Toy Manufacturers of America's Halloween Booklet, *13 Great Ways to Celebrate Halloween*, which won a National Safety Council Award and distributed to grade schools throughout the country.

"Giving back" is a rewarding experience and I wanted to continue it as a volunteer at STAP. I met with Candace, the volunteer coordinator at STAP about 2 years ago and I told her I would like to teach art classes. I thought they would be very therapeutic and a way to keep your mind off the more serious issues that most people with HIV go through. My first art painting classes were for STAP clients, their family or friends in Ithaca, Oneonta and Johnson City. I have been an events photographer for the AIDS Walk, Ithaca AIDS Bike Ride and Doggone Run and made signs and help make baskets for events. Actually love to do any kind of art work and crafts. It is very therapeutic and stimulating in a good way.

Made my first stuffed "G-love bunny" (using two 5-finger gloves to make a stuffed animal) when I was in bed for 3 weeks and needed to do something with my hands. Anyway, I wanted to make a positive out of a negative situation. Eventually made about 50 of them and most given as gifts. We even had a stuffed bunny class at STAP. And I am proud to say I brought seven of my "G-love bunnies" to Sao Paulo, Brazil where they are now being made by volunteer crafts people and also mothers who have children who are staying at the children's free cancer hospital, GRAACC (it's the St. Jude Hospital of Brazil). It is therapeutic for them to make them while waiting for their children that are having certain procedures done there. They are now selling them to raise money for this free children's hospital. I have taught art classes at The Cube and have had three art shows there on First Friday. I donate art to STAP and other worthy organizations. One being the art fundraiser for Rema Hort Mann Foundation which raises money for artists who have cancer. Their art show will be on January 28th in New York City. The Rema Hort Mann Foundation was created in September 1995 by friends and family of Rema Hort Mann to honor her joyful and vivacious life after her untimely death from stomach cancer at age 30.

After the Identity Youth Center started last year I wanted to become a mentor there. Candace said that they were interested in an art class. I could not have been happier to do this and so I began working with Erin, who is the coordinator there. Identity is a community youth center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning youth and their allies in downtown Binghamton. It is a safe and confidential place for LGBTQ teens ages 14-20 to find support, ask questions, hang out and express themselves. There definitely was no place like this when I was growing up here in the community and I wanted to be supportive and a part of this it. I think this place makes a big difference to the youth who go there. They all love it and have many activities there such as discussion groups, movies, games, ping-pong and many more activities. I have been told by the youth, “I don’t know what I would do if I hadn’t found Identity.” My art class is every Friday and we have worked in medias including painting, collage, card making, clay sculpture, making “G-love Bunnies”, tie-dyeing and will continue to try new media’s.

Because Identity is located on State Street in the Art district and Gallery Row of Binghamton, they are open to the public on First Fridays. We always invite and encourage the public to view our art work on the walls and to participate to do art with us in a live “Work in Progress” Art Event during First Friday. Have enjoyed meeting new people and sharing the Identity space, I think it has been very successful and rewarding to all involved. I think it shows the public that gays are “normal” and a “vital and creative part” of the community. It’s been great to have everyone from young kids and their moms, to families, high school and college students and senior citizens come in. It is great to hear their positive remarks and actually make art which they can take home or hang on our walls. One night we even painted the front windows which everyone seemed to enjoy. I think art is for everyone to do and to enjoy and I think we are all artists, but don’t always know it. I think some the best artists I have seen in my classes are the ones who say I have never painted before. Their art work is usually very raw and beautiful. So I encourage you all to come into our “First Friday Art in Progress Class” and join us.

The Identity youth and I have designed our first issue of the Identity newsletter on it one year anniversary. I think quite an accomplishment in itself. In August, Mayor Ryan and the City Council of Binghamton awarded Identity with the *Friends of the City Award* to recognize what they do for Binghamton. It was a great honor! Along with this award, they were given the first Pride flag to be flown over the city. They are strongly committed to helping the community to appreciate LGBTQ youth and be a more welcoming community for everyone. They have also taken part in the STAP AIDS Walk, First Youth Music Festival, Communiversity and various high school outreach events. They even served food at STAP’s Holiday Dinner in November! A large part of their outreach efforts including teaching HIV101 and Sexual Orientation in area health classes, after school programs and community health programs.

I am very proud of the Identity space and its positive environment and what it has accomplished in one year! I am also happy to say that I am still alive, giving back, productive, thriving and HIV positive for almost 21 years.

## PHARMACY INFORMATION FROM KAREN AT THE MEDICINE SHOPPE

This month I wanted to talk about medication compliance and its vital importance in your overall health. What does the word *compliance* mean? In a nutshell, it means taking the right medicine at the right time in the right way. Taking medications isn't always as simple as swallowing a pill. Medicines can only help you if you take them as prescribed.

What are some of the ways we are *non-compliant*? These can range from not filling the initial prescription, because we don't understand the importance of it, we don't think we can afford it, or we simply forget. Not refilling a prescription when it is still needed is another example of non-compliance. Many pharmacies have refill reminders in place to help you remember that your medication is due. Taking a medication at the wrong time can be detrimental to your medication therapy, too. Many medications require food to be absorbed correctly, or conversely others must be taken on an empty stomach. Sometimes taking two medications at the same time can either enhance or detract from a medication's strength. Don't be afraid to "bother" your pharmacist if you find that a drug is too difficult to take. We may have suggestions to help you with that. Stopping a medication before the entire course of therapy is completed can have dangerous consequences as well. There are many reasons that patients stop taking their medications, some have unpleasant side effects, sometimes we feel better and think there is no need to continue, or sometimes we simply forget. That leads me in to taking the medication correctly and not skipping doses. Many of us have very complicated medication regimens. A cheap and simple way to organize those medications and to help keep you on track is to buy a medication box. Your pills can be set out a week ahead of time and sorted into the correct doses at the correct time each day. A family member or friend can help you with this, or many pharmacies will now pre-package your meds for you. This also helps you to monitor yourself to see if you are forgetting any doses. Using daily cues to help you remember to take your meds is helpful as well. For instance, set your morning meds out by your coffee cup so you always remember to take them, or take your bedtime meds each night when you brush your teeth.

The final step is to educate yourself about the medications you are taking. Know what these medications are, why you are taking them, and what you can expect from them. Keep a list of your medications with you so that you can share it with your entire health care team. Let's make 2010 your healthiest year yet!

## AGING AND HIV: PART TWO FROM THE MEDICAL ADVOCATE

As we age, there are common body changes that often result in a variety of medical conditions (such as high blood pressure or osteoporosis), as well as an increased risk of illnesses and diseases. For people with HIV, there is the added complication of hidden effects from the virus itself, or from the medications used to control HIV and prevent complications.

This article covers some of the effects of common aging processes, the known effects of the HIV virus, and the results of certain HIV treatments. Fortunately, in many cases it is possible to effectively address these issues.

### The Immune System

**Aging:** Early in life, the thymus gland (which produces CD4 and other immune cells) begins to shrink, and the number of such cells gets smaller as we grow older.

**HIV:** The virus attacks CD4 cells, and their reduced number makes people with HIV more vulnerable to infection, especially those who are older. So a normal process is accelerated and results in premature aging of the immune system.

**Treatment:** Combinations of HIV meds can reduce (but not eliminate) the ongoing damage to CD4 cells. Sometimes older patients do not restore their CD4 counts to as high a level or as quickly as younger patients.

### Body Shape

**Aging:** There is a gradual loss of muscle (lean body mass) with aging. Some of this is unavoidable (for example, longer completion times for older runners), but disuse as the result of a sedentary lifestyle also contributes. In addition, there is a redistribution of fat with more collection in the belly area, especially in men. This is the result of fat depositing around the abdominal organs, not under the skin. There is some loss of fat under the skin in the face and limbs.

**HIV:** Although in earlier days there was HIV-associated wasting disease, with HIV treatment there may not be enough of the virus left to affect muscle tissue directly. Disuse and disability are the more likely culprits. Sometimes the effect of peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage in the hands and feet) can mimic muscle problems when walking.

**Treatment:** Newer HIV treatment regimens have replaced those most likely to cause unwanted body changes, but switching drugs may not change body shape. Even when these drugs are avoided from the onset of therapy, there are still other contributing factors. Recently there has been increased use of products that can be injected under the skin of the face to replace lost fat cells.

### Bone

**Aging:** Loss of bone, especially for women during and after menopause, is quite common and can occur in men at older ages.

**HIV:** There are some reports of accelerated bone loss in people with HIV, and studies are under way using sophisticated measures to determine how frequently this occurs.

**Treatment:** Calcium tablets in addition to high-calcium diets have been recommended.

In cases of major bone loss (osteoporosis), there are medications that can be taken a few times or even just once a month to reverse the condition.

## Liver

**Aging:** Because liver cells regularly rejuvenate themselves, the adverse effects of aging on this organ are minimal. What is more likely to cause liver damage is the chronic abuse of alcohol or Tylenol (acetaminophen).

**HIV:** Although the virus may be present in liver cells, most damage is from the common co-infection with hepatitis, especially hepatitis C. HIV meds can also lead to liver problems, particularly Viramune (in women with higher CD4 counts) and Aptivus.

**Treatment:** Besides recommending alcohol and drug abstinence, it is possible to treat hepatitis with available drugs or to avoid hepatitis A and B with a vaccine. Switching HIV meds may be necessary in some cases.

## Kidneys

**Aging:** The kidneys are major organs for detoxification, and usually operate efficiently even at older ages. Most reported problems with kidney function are complications of other conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or recurrent urinary tract infections.

**HIV:** HIV has been associated with a specific type of kidney disease known as HIV-associated nephropathy. Although this condition is relatively uncommon, it appears to be more frequent in African-Americans than in other groups.

**Treatment:** HIV treatment has resulted in some improvement in kidney function. Viread has been linked to minor loss in kidney function and should be avoided in people with kidney problems.

## Blood Pressure

**Aging:** It is common to see a rise in blood pressure at older ages due to stiffening of the arteries, which increases cardiovascular risk. Weight gain and salt intake over time are also factors.

**HIV:** It is controversial whether HIV itself can affect blood pressure, but HIV drugs can increase blood lipids (see below), leading to hypertension (high blood pressure).

**Treatment:** Guidelines for treatment of hypertension have been established, and lowering blood pressure has been found to decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke. Most blood pressure drugs can be used in people taking HIV meds, although the class of medications called calcium channel blockers can be problematic with certain protease inhibitors.

## Lipids (Blood Fats)

**Aging:** There tends to be an increase in cholesterol, including low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, or “bad” cholesterol, in people over 40. This rise may represent the cumulative effect of a high-fat diet in a genetically vulnerable individual. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, or “good” cholesterol, is more stable. Both have an effect on the risk of heart attack. Triglycerides are the other major class of lipids, but the associated risk of heart attack is less definite.

**HIV:** In people who have progressed to AIDS, total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol tend to be lower. Successful HIV treatment regimens usually restore lipid levels. Certain protease inhibitors, however, have been shown to elevate cholesterol and triglycerides, possibly leading to hypertension.

**Treatment:** Most experts recommend continuing the HIV regimen but adding a statin drug, such as Pravachol, but certain other statins interact with protease inhibitors and should be avoided. Another class of drugs, called fibrates, might be necessary if triglycerides remain substantially elevated. Switching to a different protease inhibitor or to a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor are other alternatives. As with blood pressure, cholesterol-lowering guidelines exist and it makes sense to apply them to people with HIV.

### Blood Sugar

**Aging:** As we age, there is a tendency for problems in the way sugar is handled by the body, because the insulin necessary for metabolism is less effective. This can lead to diabetes, especially in those who are obese or have a family history of diabetes. In other individuals, it is identified only with administration of a special test (a glucose tolerance test) and may not be a major problem. If this glucose abnormality is coupled with obesity, hypertension, high triglycerides, and low HDL cholesterol, it is referred to as the “metabolic syndrome.”

**H I V:** Treatment with protease inhibitors has been associated with glucose intolerance. Such treatment could exacerbate a tendency toward the metabolic syndrome.

**Treatment:** If possible, a switch in regimen can be considered. With a successful HIV treatment regimen, however, it may be better to continue the therapy and attempt to control glucose intolerance with weight reduction, exercise, and dietary changes. Such a strategy would also improve lipid and blood pressure abnormalities. There are also medications that are quite effective in controlling blood sugar.

### Heart Conditions

**Aging:** The frequency of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and myocardial infarction (heart attack) increases with age. This is believed to be the cumulative effect of lifestyle and genetic factors present for a lifetime, rather than irreversible changes that are age-related.

Besides hypertension, abnormal blood lipids, and diabetes, smoking is a strong predictor of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

**HIV:** Recent reports suggest that there may be an increase in the frequency of heart attacks in people with HIV. Although initially it was thought that this was most likely the result of the effect of HIV meds on cardiovascular risk factors, more recently it has been suggested that the virus itself may be having a direct negative effect on cardiovascular disease frequency.

**Treatment:** This observation would suggest that optimal HIV therapy is the best approach to minimizing heart attack risk, as well as continuing to address the known cardiac risk factors where possible.

## Conclusion

Since HIV infection has become more controllable with HIV treatment regimens, and the life expectancy of people with HIV has increased, the issue of dealing with the complications of aging has become much more important. Successful treatment should lead to longer life and successful aging for people with HIV.

## IDENTITY YOUTH CENTER COLAGE CHAPTER

Kids and teens with LGBTQ parents are invited to a COLAGE Kick-off Pizza Party on Sunday January 24th, 2010, from 3 to 5 pm at the Identity Youth Center, 206 State Street, in Binghamton. The event will kick-off the new Binghamton COLAGE chapter which will provide support and a safe place for kids and teens with one or more LGBTQ parents.

COLAGE chapters are local or regionally-based social and support groups that connect children with LGBTQ parents to a community of peers, helping them to be confident leaders who are proud of themselves and their families.

COLAGE is a national organization of people with LGBTQ parents that is dedicated to creating a safer and more just environment for COLAGERS and their families. Parents and kids (grades 3 and up) are welcome to come and enjoy a pizza dinner together before participating in "kids-only" and "parents-only" activities.

The event is sponsored by The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project and The Identity Youth Center and more information can be found at [www.idyouthorg](http://www.idyouthorg) or by calling 607.724.4308, option 3.

## FREE EVENT TICKETS FROM THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

There are currently vouchers for Binghamton Senators Hockey games and tickets for the January 9, 2010- 7:30pm and January 10, 2010- 4:00pm performance of Twelfth Night by the Madrigal Choir at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Binghamton. If interested, please contact Candace at 1-800-333-0892.

The Orpheus Theatre is offering tickets for clients this year. If someone is interested they can check on the Website and get back to me at [cphelan@stapinc.org](mailto:cphelan@stapinc.org) or call 1-800-333-0892. They are asking for one month's advance notice of the performance you are interested in. [Orpheus@stny.rr.com/607-432-1800/www.orpheustheatre.org/Office](mailto:Orpheus@stny.rr.com/607-432-1800/www.orpheustheatre.org/Office) Location: The Rowe House/31 Maple Street/Oneonta, NY

### **FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES**

Cynthia is able to do taxes for clients again this year. I am hoping that if I let you know now more will take advantage of it... She says it is easier this year with her new program they loaded on her computer and that more clients can be served this year for free...yes, for free. I am currently checking to see if she is able to do tax preparation outside of Broome County and will let you know in the next Positive Voices. Please contact me at the information below if you would like to be scheduled for Cynthia's free tax preparation services. Candace Phelan/Volunteer Coordinator/Southern Tier AIDS Program  
Phone: 607.798.1706 ext. 225/[www.stapinc.org](http://www.stapinc.org)

### **ALBANY AIDS AWARENESS DAY 2010**

Save the Date!!!..Join the New York AIDS Coalition on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for Albany AIDS Awareness Day 2010. Represent your District and make your voices heard with hundreds of peoples living with HIV/AIDS, AIDS activists and community organizers. Convince your State Legislators to continue and INCREASE support for HIV/AIDS related services. Transportation is being arranged through the HIV Network out of Syracuse and potentially locally in the Southern Tier. Please call Steve at (315) 472-8099 for transportation assistance and other information about the format and length of the day.

### **FROM THE CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Last month, we had two great workshops for clients with HIV/AIDS. One was on Social Security Disability and was presented by the Regional Manager for the Southern Tier. We were able to get lots of real, factual and current information on the application process, the review process, the denial process, the appeals process and the Judicial Review process. He spent two hours with us and I think most people walked away with a much better sense of where they stand in their journey on/towards disability delays, reasons, backlog information, denial information and other suggestions needed for the first time applicant. Our next workshop is on HIV and Diabetes and will be held Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at Trinity Memorial Church in Binghamton (where the Friends Dinner is held at 5:30 PM prior to the workshop at 6:15PM). All are welcome!!!

**FROM POET AND AUTHOR MAYA ANGELOU ON WISDOM**

'I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.'

'I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.'

'I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.'

'I've learned that making a 'living' is not the same thing as 'making a life.'

'I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.'

'I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw some things back..'

'I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.'

'I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.'

'I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back...'

'I've learned that I still have a lot to learn..'

**'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'**

## ON-GOING MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

### JOIN CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE [CAC] MEETINGS

The STAP Consumer Advisory Committee is a committee facilitated by and made up of consumers (STAP clients) who welcome other consumers and their significant others, caretakers and family members to join them on the second Tuesday of each month. This collaborative effort provides a confidential space for clients to make recommendations regarding STAP client services and other programs in a non-judgmental environment.

The meetings are held following the Friends Dinner at 6:15 at Trinity Memorial Church (on the corner of Main & Oak Streets) in downtown Binghamton. Call 1-800-333-0892 for directions or more details. If you cannot attend these meetings, mail your opinions or suggestions to STAP, 122 Baldwin Street, Johnson City, 13790, Attention CAC. CAC is encouraging consumers in other counties to organize monthly meetings in their area. Contact your case manager or Brian Wieder at 607-724-1272 to discuss developing CAC in your community.

### THE DRAGON SLAYERS

Hepatitis C and Co-Infection Support Group. Meetings at 6:00 - 7:00PM on alternate Tuesdays at Trinity M, 44 Main Street, Oak Street Entrance in Binghamton. For information, call (607) 798-1706.

### FRIENDS DINNER

Friends meet every Tuesday evening for a time of fellowship and good food. Join us at Trinity Memorial Church (on the corner of Main & Oak Streets) in downtown Binghamton. Doors open at 5PM and dinner is served between 5:30 & 5:45. No charge, just come with a smile and a friendly attitude - ready to meet and greet friends and have a hearty meal.

Parking is available on Oak Street behind the Church Annex. Use the Oak Street entrance for the cafeteria. Free bus passes are available for STAP clients! Call your case manager for details. Bus passes available for transportation to/from the Friends Dinner only. For more information call Bill at 607-724-0103.

### FREE ANONYMOUS RAPID HIV TESTING

Walk-in Anonymous testing every Monday from 1:00 - 4:30PM and Thursday from 1:00 - 3:00PM at STAP's office, 122 Baldwin Street, Johnson City, NY.

For information and other testing times available through the month, please call (607) 798-1706. Confidential Rapid Testing is also available Friday 9AM- Noon & by Appointment.

## ONEONTA SOCIAL GROUP

Oneonta Social Group every Saturday at the First Methodist Church, 66 Chestnut Street in the Dolly Room from 12:30PM-1:30PM. HIV/AIDS and affected welcome - Brunch is between 11:30-1PM. This is not an official STAP Group.

## ASK THE MEDICAL ADVOCATE

Have general questions or concerns regarding HIV?  
Want to better manage side effects of your HIV medications?  
Concerned about interactions between your HIV meds and other meds that you take?  
Want to better understand the results of your blood work or other lab tests?  
Concerned about HIV exposure risks to your negative partner?  
Interested in alternative or complementary therapies for HIV?

STAP's Medical Advocate, James Elrod, is available to answer your questions—by phone, email, or in person—you choose! It's a great way to get a direct, individualized answer to your questions. Contact James at (607) 426-9445, or by email: [jelrod@stapinc.org](mailto:jelrod@stapinc.org)

## HOPE DISPENSARY OF THE SOUTHERN TIER

The Hope Dispensary of the Southern Tier, a service provided by Lourdes Hospital, is a new program designed to provide medications to those that are uninsured or underinsured and have a limited income. Here is how you qualify:

1. You must have no prescription coverage
2. Have a photo ID or Social Security Card
3. Bring one of any of the following as proof of income: Pay Stubs or Bank Statement, SSI/SSD paperwork or Unemployment or Pink Slip form from employer.
4. Bring proof of residency - one piece of mail with your name and address, such as a phone bill, NYSEG bill or cable bill.
5. Bring the prescription with you

If you need assistance with providing this information to determine eligibility, they have an onsite Social Worker who can help you with the process. There is a monthly income level that you cannot exceed. The information is listed on the next page.

### Family Size and Monthly Income

1 = \$1,805	2 = \$2,428
3 = \$3,052	4 = \$3,675
5 = \$4,298	6 = \$4,922
7 = \$5,545	8 = \$6,168

The Hope Dispensary will verify your information onsite and the Social Worker that is present each day they are open will also provide screenings for financial assistance to access 50% discounted up to possibly free healthcare in the Lourdes network. This is great information!!!

Hope Dispensary does not carry all medications. They do cover HIV medication as well as antidepressants. They do not carry any controlled substances or birth control. If they do not have the medication that you need, they have programs developed so that you might qualify for free medication directly from the pharmaceutical corporations. They use medication samples and generic medications. They are located at 477 State Street in Binghamton and their number is 607-584-9376. They are open Monday through Friday from 10AM - 6PM.

### **New LGBT Information Site Launched**

[www.asaging.org/larc](http://www.asaging.org/larc)

The American Society on Aging has created a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Aging Resources Clearinghouse that holds information related to and resources for people aged 50 and older. The site's searchable resources span several categories: education and training; health and mental health; housing and support services; populations and communities; and public policy, advocacy, and legal issues. Also available are annotated listings for service providers, community and professional organizations, information sites, reports and articles, and links for ordering DVDs, books, and other useful products.

### **PROJECT ATTAIN**

The Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking Center holds free classes each month to help people get the training they need to be comfortable using important computer software programs. Call 607-772-4771/www.bul.sunyeoc.org. Classes are FREE!!!!

### **FREE CELL PHONES**

There is a government sponsored program available that can provide you with a free cell phone and 68 free minutes per month. Eligibility is based on your participation in one of several State or government programs like PUBLIC HOUSING, FOOD STAMPS, MEDICAID and more. There is also a limit to the amount of income you receive each month. This program is called LifeLine Assistance and you can find out about it through safelink.com or calling 1-800-378-1684. If you need help with the application process, please call your STAP case manager for assistance.